

animal. Of the opposite of this—substances attractive to the rat—I have no knowledge. Oil of roodium is the one for which the claim is most often made, and is used to attract the animals to poison or bait.

The Offering of Rewards—This has been employed in a number of places with some success. Just how economical it would be would of course depend upon the locality and as to how badly infested it was. The average wages of the laboring class divided by the number of rats the average individual would catch in a day if he devoted his whole time to this pursuit, would probably be a rough estimate of the amount of reward per rat necessary to be attractive if large numbers were to be destroyed, although a moderate number could probably be obtained at a lower rate if such a reward were sufficient in amount to be attractive to boys. The only objections that I have heard offered to this method are: First, that attracted by the reward, some thrifty individuals have gone into the rat raising industry; and, second, that in countries where plague prevails among the rats, the number of cases might be increased by the handling of them.

The first of these objections could be met by not offering too large a reward, and withdrawing and renewing this reward without notice and at irregular intervals. The second objection would be met, partially at any rate, by the use of tongs in the handling of the dead rodents.

We see from what has been said that the methods that may be employed for the destruction of rats are numerous, each having some advantages and some disadvantages, probably a combination of several of these methods being the best way; and while the most important are being applied by the municipal authorities, it would be of advantage to, by means of a circular published in the daily papers, call upon all householders and citizens to contribute their mite to the work by destroying those about their own premises, the circular setting forth the most practical method for this purpose.

THE PRACTICAL VALUE OF THE STATE MEDICAL LAW.*

By W. W. CROSS, M. D., Visalia.

MOST of us are familiar with the State law supposed to govern the practice of medicine in the State of California only by reading it as printed in the Register. A limited experience in watching an attempt to put the law into action against an offender soon brings one to look upon the whole matter as a very complicated affair, and to wonder if something could not be done to make the present law more efficient, or sup-

plant it by another. To make a new law would mean to learn many things after it has been enacted which have been gained by experience with the present one, and it is doubtful if a new law could possibly work any better than the present one can be made to, by some changes or by other matters on the outside being adjusted to make it operate more efficiently.

When anyone guilty of violating the present law is arrested, he at once puts up all the fight in him, and brings to bear all the influence of his friends to avoid conviction. The complaining witness in the case will, without doubt, appear in court a much worse person than the party on trial, as I have had an opportunity to observe. I can safely state that all persons who were present at one trial I have in mind felt very sorry for the complaining witness in the case. The defendant generally is a man who advertises in the daily or weekly papers, and I am sorry to say that the purchase of a little advertising space in one of the so-called moral mouthpieces of the public soon lulls it to a beautiful silence, or causes it to take up the cause of the defendant for the profit gained from the advertising. They speak not of the benefit to the public in general if the law governing the practice of medicine is enforced. They do not in any way try to shape public opinion to secure a conviction, thereby suppressing a dishonest practitioner, who in almost every case is an ignorant one.

I quote here a contract which came to my hands from the patient who signed it:

Dr. M. E. L. Fredo,
Specialist and Sanitarium,
No. 714 S. Court St.,
Visalia, Cal., January 9th, 1903.

I Dr. M. E. Elfreda Here by agrees to dottor Mr. J. Salazar and furni She all Medicina and cash for the Som at fifty \$50.00 Dollare in monthly payemant \$10.00 dollar down and the balance teen \$10.00 Dollare thirty day after each month tal it all payde.

I Mrs. E. Romero I promer to pay Dottor M. E. El Fredo the abov contractts monthly payments taen \$10.00 Dollare I signo my name.

MRS. E. ROMERO.

and I Mr. J. Salazar Takey back Satha and I have to call another dottor that Mrs. E. Romero To pay eitre one I call for Mrs. Romero.

DR. M. EL FREDO.

With the above specimen before us we would not expect anyone to accuse us of jealousy, or of fear that our practice would be taken from us by a man who could do no better in an attempt at a little ordinary English. We certainly are not going to be benefited to any great extent if such a person is interfered with in his ravages upon a confiding public. Yet we can safely say that should any member in this room swear to a complaint against this party where he may now be at work, and he is still at large, it would be a sad day for the complaining witness, and he might in the end have to defend himself against

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a damage suit, or pay some attorney a good fee to stop the proceedings.

Unfortunately for us, the fight made against such persons is for the benefit of the general public, and with them the fight must be made. A gentleman dislikes to go out of his way to mix up in a row with such men as these persons generally are, and when he does, if the general public could be made to see that the law is enforced, not from personal jealousy, through business motives or as a matter of persecution, but for their own good, then a conviction could be had. It is not possible to get a conviction in these cases unless the medical men *do* take an interest, because they are working in the field that will bring them in contact with violators of the law, and upon their information only can the grounds for an action be secured, and when once an action has been commenced, it should be so handled that the jury can be made to see why the action was commenced and why a conviction should be made.

To do this all complaints should be made by some one, away from the local fight, whose business it is to look up such cases and file the information against the defendant. By so conducting the suit, no local conditions can enter into the action, but a straight fight can be made to make all persons conform to the law because it is right; and besides, the public has a right to be protected. Then the fact that Dr. A, a local physician, had an encounter with the defendant, or there had been trouble in a certain drug store, all of which excited Dr. A to swear to a complaint against the defendant, the jury could not take into consideration in coming to a verdict; it should not enter into the case at all.

We have a board, or a man representing the board, who looks after such cases. He knows nobody's trouble, but is here to protect the community at large. In this way a member of the local profession will not have to quit his work and mix in a row or antagonize all the patients of the defendant. By such a system all illegal practitioners would be more readily reported by the local physician. A local medical society swearing to a complaint would be just as unsuccessful as an individual in fighting against such a defendant. If the same person conducted all such cases a record would soon be made of persons drifting from place to place practicing without a license. I would cite the federal courts in the prosecution of offenders, and the readiness with which a conviction is usually obtained, and compare them with the general criminal proceedings of any community. The national laws are enforced much more quickly and rigidly, because some one is always working for that purpose, and local affairs do not figure. The business of the complaining witness will not suffer if he swears to a complaint.

In the past year we have seen two trials in which the prosecuting attorney made a hard fight, but in both cases the local state of affairs prevented a conviction. The trials cost the friends of the defendant a thousand dollars, and the district attorney felt that his only way to win was to keep trying and make the business so unprofitable that the defendant would finally leave the country.

We have taken the pains to gather from reliable sources the work done by the State Board of Examiners, and find that they have spent money in prosecuting persons practicing in violation of the law and they have found convictions more easily made when conducted by them, than when left to the local district attorney. We think that it should be the duty of the Board of Examiners to conduct such prosecutions, and it is just as necessary that men who never have made application for a license or seen the inside of a medical school be hauled up as to require a high standard for admission to practice from those who have spent all the money they had endeavoring to acquire a medical education. Unfortunately, the board has troubles of its own, and as its supply of money is not by any means as large as the demands made upon its treasury, some help will have to be given, either by the State, *from where it should come*, or from the medical profession in the State.

The present method of organizing the medical profession may in the near future make it possible to get help in such matters, though it does seem unjust that the medical profession should tax itself to protect the people. The people should meet these expenses, for they reap the benefit. A patient who is informed that he has bright's disease and cannot be cured, or that he has a condition from which he can be relieved only by an operation, is in a frame of mind to accept the promise of a quack, and will readily give up money when promised a cure, or worse still, perhaps allow a malignant condition to advance past an operative stage. People who are imposed upon can only be protected by the profession showing them how and when their confidence is misplaced and stimulating them to enforce laws already enacted for their good.

There is another clause in the law whereby dishonest practitioners who have a license can have their license revoked; this also should be enforced. To this end the State Board of Examiners have also taken steps, but find themselves confronted by suits attacking the constitutionality of the act, and that feature of the fight is now pending in the courts. In all of these legal battles the business fight peculiar to any place comes at once prominently forward, and a defendant always tries to avoid conviction by pleading before the jury, persecution, business jealousy or personal grievances of the complaining wit-

ness. The complaining witness may be honest in swearing to the complaint, but generally he is incited thereto by some personal feeling; and if he has ever at any time in his life been a little off color the attorneys for the defense go back over his trail, and almost no one present will have much compassion for the complaining witness.

I hope that among you who are present, or those of you who may hereafter read this, and have influence that you can bring to bear, will do so. If a little more interest may be aroused on the subject, I will feel that the time we have consumed has not been wasted.

DISCUSSION.

Dr. A. B. Cowan said that the present was a fairly good law, gained after a hard fight. The law seems to be good and states fully what persons are to be considered as practicing medicine and what the penalties for doing so illegally are. He considered it the duty of county societies to see that suits against illegal practitioners were brought and properly fought. In his opinion the licensing of osteopaths nullified a goodly portion of the law, for they could do much harm, and it was not possible to get at them. He cited a case of strangulated hernia that fell in the way of an osteopath who counseled against operation; the patient died. District attorneys will do little or nothing; the societies should see that the work is done.

Dr. Chester A. Rowell said that he had unfortunately not been present when the paper was read. As to the law, he had but little to say. It was prepared by a committee of the State Society and fought for by them. It had been a very difficult matter to make and keep any law regulating the practice of medicine for the past 25 years; the present law was a compromise, but he thought it a good one. He opposed the compromise made in letting the osteopath bill go through in order to get the medical law, for he considered it a bad compromise. The present law he considered broad enough to cover the ground, and he had no doubt that it would be supported by the Supreme Court.

Dr. Geo. A. Hare thought the whole subject needed plenty of illumination and discussion. There had always been a fight over any medical legislation, but that this was the case was largely the fault of the profession, for it was so poorly organized. While there are many doctors, they are or have been indifferent and organization has meant nothing to them; the whole question, he thought, hinged upon the intelligent and complete organization of the medical profession. When the bill was passed, it was fought for by the State Society, but the Society then had but about 400 members; now it has 1400 members at least and is representative of the whole State, and a large percentage of the physicians in the State. Individuals, he thought, could do but little to enforce the law; an organized profession could do a great deal by awakening public sentiment. He said that in Fresno County they were fortunate; no member of their society would refuse to swear out a complaint and the newspapers would help them; one of the papers would not accept quack advertising and was a staunch friend of the medical profession. He thought the day fast coming when every reputable doctor in the State would have to be a member of his county medical society, and then the public could not turn down the medical men in a community, for they would

be organized and prepared to mold public opinion on such matters.

Dr. W. N. Sherman said that conditions in Fresno were ideal, for they had a large and harmonious county society, and could do a good deal in that way. In other places, where there were no county societies and the profession was not harmonious, little could be done.

Dr. Philip Mills Jones discussed the question of organization and its relation to this matter of properly carrying out the spirit as well as the letter of the law. The movement toward complete organization was spreading so rapidly that he thought it would not be long before all the quacks and illegal practitioners could be driven out. But county societies would have to help in the matter by looking after the physicians in their counties and reporting all illegal practitioners to the State Society office, or to the Board of Examiners. The Board should bring the suits in all cases, for it was the duty of the Board to protect the public by seeing that the law which they represent is enforced. The Board would very gladly help any community or any county society in the work, and if necessary would see that the suits were properly brought.

Dr. Cross, in closing, said that the value of organization could not be overestimated in this connection. With a harmonious organization these suits could be more easily and readily handled and convictions secured. Fresno and Tulare counties were opposites; in the latter there was no society and the profession was not at all harmonious. He thought it not right that he, as an individual, should be called upon to get into such a dirty mess as a fight against an illegal practitioner in order to protect the public, who turn around and "roast" the man who brings the suit and sympathize with the quack, whom they regard as a martyr to professional jealousy. The Board of Examiners should be kept at work on this thing, and if the State will not appropriate money for attorneys, then the societies should do so; but the work should be done and be done by the Board. If the quacks are prosecuted often enough and hard enough, they will be forced out.

NIHILISM IN THERAPEUTICS.

In an address to the Minnesota Pharmaceutical Association, under the above caption, published in *Northwestern Lancet*, October, Dr. Richard Olding Beard has some remarkably pertinent things to say; and he says them forcefully. He speaks of three factors that have lead the pharmacist from his former standing amongst the arts into the ranks of commercialism and away from friendly relations with the physician. "In the men—for you have filled the ranks of your should-be profession with imperfectly educated and poorly trained recruits." "In the matter of methods * * * you have too commonly permitted your licensees to prescribe as well as to dispense drugs. * * * You have frequently encouraged the practice of repeatedly filling prescriptions, often for miscellaneous employment, without orders from the writer." "In the matter of materials the indictment is fully as serious a one. You have not always required a sufficient guarantee of the quality of materials to the use of which your customers have committed their faith. A want of uniformity in the pharmaceutical preparations you dispense has prejudiced the possibility of a systematic study of their effects. Standardization of drugs is a very imperative need. You commonly keep upon your cabinet shelves preparations of whose composition you know little or nothing, whose virtues only